



PROCEDURES MANUAL

SUBJECT: Mayday & Emergency Condition Declaration Procedure

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Page 1 of 5

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203.01.15 Mayday & Emergency Condition Declaration at Emergency Incidents

A. Purpose

1. This procedure is intended to ensure that all members operating at an emergency scene are aware that an emergency situation on the scene is imminent or has already occurred.
2. This procedure will outline the difference between the terms “Mayday” and “Emergency”

B. Definitions

The following definitions will be used to alert members operating at an incident:

1. **“MAYDAY”** - Used when a firefighter is in danger. A firefighter must declare a MAYDAY when confronted by, but not limited to the following situations:
 - a. Injured and in need of immediate assistance or unable to reach a safe location under their own power.
 - b. Lost / Disoriented.
 - c. Trapped / Entangled and unable to exit structure before expending air supply.
 - d. Low on Air / Low air alarm sounding in conjunction with any other item listed.
 - e. Negative or no response to PAR after second attempt (*Refer to Section 202.07 Accountability C. “Policy”; 2. “Personnel Accountability Report”; f. “Negative or No response to location of PAR”*).
 - f. “MAYDAY” will also be declared by other members and/or RAT Team that locate a member(s) in any of the above situations.
2. **“EMERGENCY”** - Used when an emergency is imminent, or has already happened, such as:
 - a. A collapse of a wall, the roof or the building.
 - b. A potential- collapse that needs to be investigated.
 - c. A backdraft or an explosion.
 - d. Flashover or rapidly changing fire conditions.

- e. Water supply interruption which puts firefighters in a precarious position.
- f. Hole(s) in the floor.
- g. Burned out or missing stairs.
- h. Weakened or compromised structural members.
- i. Open shaft(s).
- j. Non-secured elevator doors.
- k. Elevators with swing type doors.
- l. Downed power lines in street or yard.
- m. Any other circumstance that can seriously injure a firefighter.
- n. Immediate evacuation of the building necessary for any of the above or for any circumstance the incident commander deems necessary.
- o. Requesting an additional alarm.

Note: The "MAYDAY" declaration is reserved for only those situations when a firefighter is in peril as described above. When a hazardous condition exists the "Emergency" declaration shall be utilized.

C. Mayday Procedure

1. The following procedure will be used to alert firefighters on the emergency scene of a Mayday.
2. When in distress, the firefighter(s) shall declare a Mayday. This shall clear the radio talk group of all other radio traffic.
 - a. The firefighter shall repeat the word "MAYDAY" three (3) times followed by the **nature of the Mayday, last known location, Company number, and name(s) of the firefighter(s) involved if possible and what, if any plans they have to remove themselves from the situation.** (Example - "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, - Firefighter Down - Second Floor - Firefighter Doe from Engine 22).
 - b. Any Fire Company finding a firefighter down shall declare a Mayday and the Mayday information shall be repeated including the manner of removal from the structure. (Example - "Mayday - Mayday - Mayday - Firefighter Down - Lieutenant from Engine 22 - We will be coming out the rear door"). NOTE: A Mayday declaration only occurs when the downed firefighter is initially found. If a Mayday has already been declared for the downed firefighter, another Mayday declaration does **not** occur when a company locates the firefighter. However, the company can relay pertinent information, for example the name of the firefighter and manner of removal to the RAT Group Supervisor.
 - c. The firefighter shall then manually activate their PASS device.

3. The **Incident Commander** will:
- a. Shall attempt to confirm the Mayday and request all pertinent information not received from the firefighter(s) involved in the Mayday. For example, if the Incident Commander didn't hear or understand, the nature, the location, or firefighter(s) involved, he would ask the firefighter(s) to repeat or ask specific questions.
 - b. Maintain radio contact with those involved in the Mayday until the RAT Group Supervisor is assigned.
 - c. Notify all Companies on the scene of the "Mayday" situation
 - d. Notify Dispatch of the "Mayday" situation. Request an additional Alarm, an additional RAT Company and an additional District Chief.
 - e. Order all Companies to switch their radios to the Alternate Fireground channel (channel 16 in their current Fire Ground Talk Group-currently this is the Mayday Channel) for routine fire ground messages. The original fire ground channel will only be used for the firefighter(s) involved in the MAYDAY, the RAT Group Supervisor, the Rapid Assistance Teams and the Heavy Rescue Company. If the Incident Commander knows which Fire Companies are involved, he can state "all Companies switch to the Alternate FG channel (currently the Mayday Channel) with the exception of Engine 22, RAT 25, District 5 and Heavy Rescue 25".
NOTE: If there is a Company inside the structure that is in close proximity to the Mayday, and they feel they can assist in extricating the distressed firefighter(s) in a timely manner, they will notify Command and stay on the original fire ground channel.
 - f. Shall order Accountability to conduct a PAR on the Alternate FG channel (currently the Mayday Channel), to determine if any other Companies are unaccounted for. Any Companies that do not respond to the PAR should be relayed to the Incident Commander so he/she can relay the information to the RAT Chief.
 - g. In the event another "Mayday" occurs while operating on the Alternate FG channel (currently the Mayday Channel), the Incident Commander will consider moving everyone to another fire ground channel, for example, Zone being used "Tac 1" channel. This should only be considered in **extreme circumstances** and will then require another PAR being performed on the "Tac" channel.
 - h. For more detail on specific duties and responsibilities during RAT operations - *Reference Section 203.01.14 Rapid Assist Teams (RAT.)*

4. Dispatch Responsibilities:
 - a. Transmit an additional alarm, dispatch an additional District Chief to replace the second on-scene District Chief who has become the RAT Group Supervisor and an additional RAT Company.
 - b. Page the 40-hr staff (All Call).
 - c. Once the Incident Commander has all on-scene Companies switch to the Alternate FG channel (currently the Mayday channel), Dispatch will notify all future dispatched and en-route Companies that the current fire ground channel is now the Alternate FG channel (currently the Mayday channel) in the originally dispatched fire zone.
 - d. Dispatch will need to monitor both the original fire ground channel and the Alternate FG channel (currently the Mayday channel).

D. Emergency Condition(s) Alert Procedure

1. This procedure shall be used to alert firefighters on the fire ground of an emergency condition(s).
2. To clear all radio traffic on the fire ground channel, the Fire Officer or firefighter requesting the emergency shall state their Company number followed by the word "Emergency" and the **nature, location and type of emergency** identified. For example, "Engine 22 Emergency, there is a large hole in the floor on floor number 2". At this time **no** other radio traffic shall be transmitted until the Incident Commander acknowledges the "Emergency" radio traffic.

Note: The "Emergency" declaration shall be reserved for situations on the fire ground presenting imminent danger to firefighters. (See aforementioned potentially dangerous situations).
3. Following the "Emergency" declaration, immediately verbally announce findings to anyone in the area.
4. The Incident Commander upon hearing the Emergency Declaration shall immediately repeat the emergency traffic as well as orders to rectify or retreat from the situation. (Example - "Command, Emergency - All Companies operating at 123 Main St. there is a large hole on floor 2, stay off the second floor!")
5. For some "Emergency" declaration the Incident Commander **can** request that Dispatch give the emergency tone over the fireground channel prior to the "Emergency" declaration. Dispatch should only send the emergency tone over the fireground channel on request from the Incident Commander.
6. The Company or Firefighter declaring the "Emergency" will then:
 - a. Follow the orders of Command.
 - b. Attempt to cover hole if possible.
 - c. Block area with a large object if possible.

- d. Attempt to secure area if possible.
 - e. Guard area if possible and conditions allow.
 - f. Secure a door if needed by driving a wedge under it.
 - g. Mark the area, "Danger - Do Not Enter" if possible.
 - h. Mark area as an exclusion zone with fire line or caution tape if possible.
7. If the Incident Commander determines it is necessary to evacuate the structure or hazard zone, he/she shall order all firefighters to "Retreat". The Incident Commander shall always request from Dispatch the emergency tone prior to the announcement to retreat when ordering Companies out of a building. The Incident Commander shall use the command "Emergency" followed by the word "Retreat": stated three (3) times and finally request a PAR be given when the Company has exited the building or hazard zone. For example, "Main St Command to Dispatch give me the emergency tone". Following the tone announce "Emergency, Retreat, Retreat, Retreat give a PAR upon exiting the building".
- a. Once Command gives the order to "Retreat", there shall be **no discussion** concerning this order on the radio. All Companies shall exit the building and prepare for a PAR.
 - b. Upon the order to "Retreat", all on-scene fire apparatus, shall give ten (10) - three (3) second blasts of their air horns.
 - c. Company Officers shall give a PAR and location upon exiting the building or hazard zone. For example, "Engine 19 out of the building on the Alpha Side with a PAR."
 - d. Accountability shall then initiate a PAR once all companies have exited the building or hazard zone. Start the PAR with the Companies that were in the most dangerous position prior to exiting the building or hazard zone. Accountability does not have to ask companies for a PAR that have already self reported upon exiting the building or hazard zone.
 - e. Following the PAR, all Officers shall meet at the Command Post.
8. Any individual, whether it is a firefighter or an officer that finds a hazard is required to communicate on the radio using "Emergency" traffic, however if their Company Officer is with the firefighter, the Company Officer should communicate the "Emergency" traffic